

Basil Chulev



The Golden Funeral Masks of Angels from the City of Light - Ohrid

Republic of Macedonia
2014



Above: **Golden funeral masks from Trebenište near Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, 6th century BCE**

The discovery

Ohrid, the city of Light, after two and a half millennia showed us again the golden immortal faces of his angels. The discovery of priceless treasures from Trebenište village which is located on the road Ohrid-Kičevo was like a movie: Ancient Macedonian tombs from the first half of 1st millennium BCE loaded with gold, silver and rich royal burial gifts. On September 30, 2002, the fifth consecutive golden mask was found, which is rare practice in archaeology. In less than a century, or more precisely for 84 years, although in a not big distance, in the country that actually cannot invest a lot in expensive excavations, five golden masks were found! These findings, like many others before, once again proved that Macedonia is indeed Europe's richest archaeological treasure.

The archaeological site Gorenci/Trebenište which roughly dates from 6th century BCE was discovered for the first time in 1918. The necropolis is considered as one of the most interesting archaeological sites from the Iron Age in Macedonia and abroad. 56 graves, of which the most important and oldest were 12 royal tombs, the whole dynasty which was buried with all the features and symbols of their power. So far have been discovered: five gold funerary masks, a number of gold bracelets, gold gloves, silver and bronze vessels, jewelry, weapons, sandals, etc. Thus the Trebenište Necropolis remains one of the most important archaeological sites from the Archaic Period in Macedonia, and a living reminder of the richness and subtlety of the Macedonian civilization since most ancient times.

The name of the village of *Trebenište* clarifies yet another fact. Its etymology¹ reveals that this location in the distant past was traditionally used as a holy place for sacrifice. Today this gruesome custom may look barbaric and incredible, but ancient people believed that this was the only way in which they can contact and please the gods for better hunt, fertility of the cattle, crops, protection, etc. Sacrificial sites like this *Trebište/Trebenište* sanctuary, for offering animal and human sacrifices to the gods, were very common² in the human history and they resisted even the brutal oppression of Christianity. In the near future researchers and modern archaeologists will certainly discover more material evidence related to this one.

History of the discovery of royal golden masks from the necropolis near the villages of Trebenište, Radolište and Gorenci (10 miles north of Ohrid) has now 100 years long tradition. In this necropolis so far five (5) funerary masks were found in three occasions, twice in two graves and once a single mask, dating from the 6th century BCE, with rich funerary offerings (gold and silver jewelry, silver and bronze vessels, glass and amber beads, black and figurative ceramics, weapons, utility ceramics, and so on).

The first two masks were found by accident in the spring of 1918, during the Bulgar occupation of this part of Macedonia. At the height of the military operations, during the digging of the military trenches something extraordinary came out from under the earth – an ancient Macedonian royal graveyard. Immediately archaeological recognition and further excavations were made by B. Filow, which in cooperation with K. Shkorpil have discovered seven royal tombs, from which the precious gold and other material was robbed and from Macedonia with illegal military operation was transported to the Archeological Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria, where it is located until today.

¹ Found also as ‘*Trebište*’ in Russian*, from the Macedonic verb root “*treba*” - ‘need, necessity’ in plain Macedonian.

* “The struggle of Christianity with the remnants of paganism in ancient Russia” by K.M. Jalkovski, v.1, p. 4.

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trebište>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trebinje>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trebisht>
https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trebeško_Brdo
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Trebeshinë
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trebesing>
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C5%99ebe%C5%A1ice_\(Bene%C5%A1ov_District\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C5%99ebe%C5%A1ice_(Bene%C5%A1ov_District))
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C5%99ebe%C5%A1ice_\(Kutn%C3%A1_Hora_District\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C5%99ebe%C5%A1ice_(Kutn%C3%A1_Hora_District))
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C5%99ebestovice>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C5%99ebe%C5%A1ov>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trebe%C5%A1e>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trebe%C8%99>
<https://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Трепишта>

Then in 1919, Macedonia falls under occupation of the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (*Kingdom of S.H.S.*), when also a part of the lake Ohrid shore with 22 Macedonian villages was handed over in a territory exchange to the newly created “Albanian” state. Twelve years later, 1930-1934, Serbian archaeologist H. Vulić discovered another six royal graves in the same nekropolis, with two other golden masks along with other findings, all of which were again robbed from Macedonia, but this time taken to the Serbian “National” Museum in Belgrade. After long dispute for repatriation of these Macedonian treasures recently Macedonia have obtained from Serbia only a manufactured copy of the valuable masks. Bulgaria never answered the same request.



And finally the fifth consecutive golden mask was found in 2002, in a grave discovered at yet another necropolis from the same chronological horizon unearthed at the Upper Gate archaeological site, in the inner urban area of city of Ohrid. The research and breathtaking discovery was made by the Macedonian team lead by the archaeologist Pasko Kuzman. In the area popularly known as “Forbidden Meadow” an exceptionally intriguing but very clear funerary situation from the end of the Archaic Period was discovered. The evidence suggested that the cremated persons were 6 warriors, most probably killed in battle. On all four sides around the pyre, sand from the lake was piled and military equipment was placed on top of it – 6 bronze helmets (3 in the southeastern part, 3 in the northwestern), bronze greaves (5 in the eastern part, 6 in the northwestern), 15 iron spearheads (the wooden parts of which were totally decomposed), and many other items.

One plainly observable feature, and probably the real appearance of the owners of these riches, is clearly observable even for a non-expert eye on all the 5 masks – these Macedonic Aryans were all bearded. And the beard in plain Latin/Italian is '*Barba*', hence the 'Barb-Aryans'; there's no other etymological plausible explanation whatsoever.



Unexpected discovery of these rich graves and such concentration of funeral golden masks in Ohrid region shed a new light on the Macedonian most ancient history, and

caught the Western European scientists by surprise. And, sad but true – completely apart from the 19th century fabricated history model. The masks from proper Macedonia are dated from the period which is a whole millennium away from the only other archaeological period when a golden mask was ever discovered in the Macedonian Peninsula (found 1876 at Mycenae by Heinrich Schliemann), and generally in Europe so far.



Yet, there's another golden mask from the same Macedonic period, discovered by "Greek" archaeologists in the necropolis of Bela (lat. *Pella*), the ancient Macedonian capital in Lower (Aegean) Macedonia. But, notoriously delinquent "Greex" misrepresent it as part of the "*Hellenistic era*" which is complete nonsense since we all know that the "*Hellenistic period*" covers the time of Mediterranean history between the death of Alexander III of Macedon in 323 BCE and the emergence of the Roman Empire as signified by the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, and the subsequent conquest of Macedonian Ptolemaic Egypt the following year.



Above: Macedonian bronze helmet with gold decoration and Golden Mask from a noble warrior's grave at Archontiko (Pella), Aegean Macedonia, Tomb 279, ca. 550 BCE



Engelines, the Macedonian Angels from 6th century BCE

In Macedonia, and not only in the Ohrid and Struga region, the bodies and the heads of the most prominent members of the archaic communities around 6th century BCE, were covered with gold. These were the local rulers ('Čelniks') of the archaic period, in the times immediately before the larger Macedonian state was to be reformed under the rule of the most powerful Macedonian dynasty, the Aegeads (lat. *Argeads*), the renowned founders of the first and greatest known European empire – Macedonian. A rich funeral inventory that was found in these tombs was dated towards the end of the 6th century BCE. This fact confirms the thesis regarding the presence of lavish vessels, goblets and silver rhytons – only to be found in the royal or tombs of the great Barb-Aryan 'Čelniks' ('*Chieftains*' in plain Macedonian) and prominent *Archonts*. The warrior-kings have been buried there, in ceremonial attire, with their arms, vessels, golden masks, and other precious belongings.



Written sources about Macedonia, Thrace, Skythia and Asia Minor equally interpret these objects as royal insignias (Popović, 1994). Necropolises with such rich content say that the population they belong to lived in these regions for a long-enough period of time

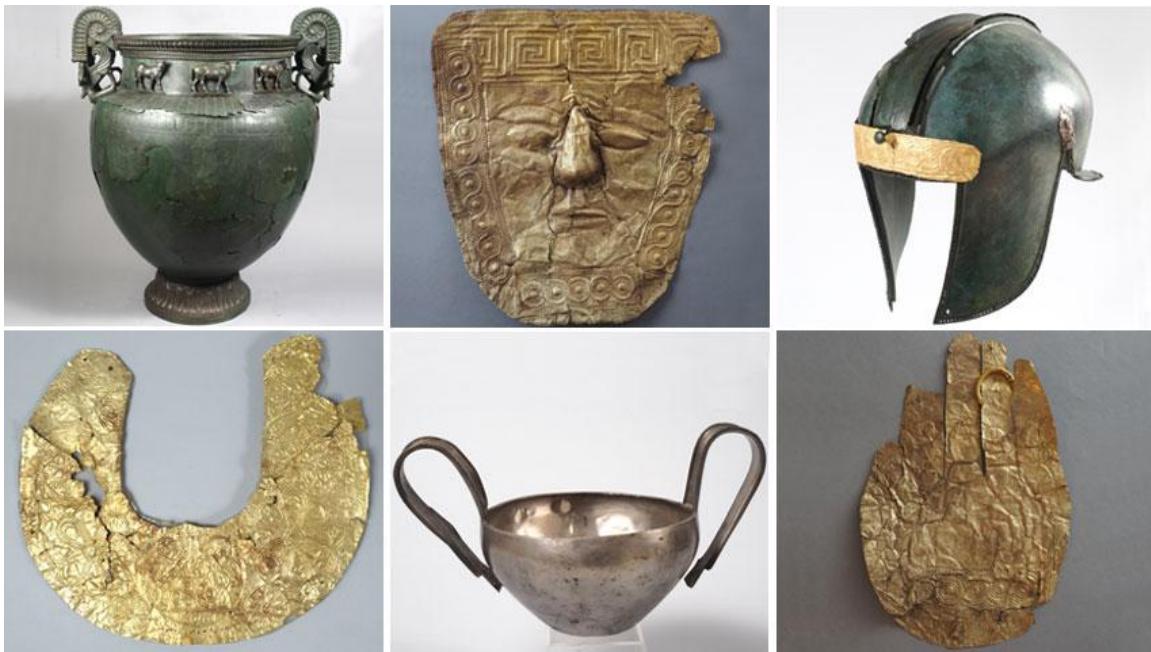
without major turbulences (wars, migrations, or natural disasters). About that time excellent conditions for a significant economic rise have been created: the exploitation of the ore, and as a consequence metallurgy and coinage, as the highest civilization benefit. The Brygo-Paionian-Chalkidian Macedonic cultural urheimat, was centered with master-craftsmen, best artists, toreutics, jewelers, and from there the links to the Mediterranean trade and art centers were intensified on a regular basis. Listed there was obvious evidence that in all 3 regions we need to count on the same population, which in these royal burials left its own bely and proof of its own prosperity and arduous mastery, but also its affinity to a material wealth. Trebenište region in the past was also famous for its rich silver bed – the silver mines of Damastion mentioned by Strabo were nearby. The most important roads of the Macedonian Peninsula used to intersect there as well, stretching in all directions. Three and a half kilometers west of Lake Ohrid lies a plain crossed by the river Drin/Drim (ancient *Drilon*). The mountain range in the west separates this inner central Aegean basin from the Adriatic and Ionian Sea.



Above: a map of the central and western intersection of the Cambonian Road (lat. *Via Egnatia*) with both capital cities of Macedonia, Aigai and Pella, and few other major urban centers in the nearby Macedonic, Epir, and Adriatic coast regions

All these phenomena fit in the historical points of the Macedonic continuity in the region, with final conclusion that all the graves are undoubtedly Macedonian. This fact has been underlined many times, by different scholars. The archaeologist Antonis Kotsonas in his

paper "Why was there no Dark Age in Macedonia?" explains this fact very clear: "*For most of the 20th century, the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age over much of Greece and the Aegean was widely referred to as the 'Dark Age'. Interpretations of the period in Macedonia, as elsewhere, were often colored by stories of migrations and invasions. Nonetheless, the terminological consensus over the labeling of this uneasy period as a 'Dark Age' did not extend to Macedonia; the term Early Iron Age was systematically – and emphatically – preferred instead. The reasons for this idiosyncratic choice are not explicitly referred to in relevant literature, but will be shown to depend on: the conceptual load of the two terms; disciplinary constructs concerning the prehistory of Macedonia; and the different historical trajectories of Macedonia and the southern Greek mainland in the Late Bronze Age.*" ³



According to the written ancient sources of the known history, the first inhabitants of the region were called *Engelines* and *Desarets* (or *Desaretians*). The earliest written source, Hecataeus, positioned them near the *Chaones*, who dwelled in the northeastern region of Epirus. Apollonius of Rhodos (3rd c. BCE) locates them near Ceraunian Mountains, where were the graves of Kadmo and Harmonia. He also states that: "*their graves were at the bank of Illyrian river, and somewhere there were the Engelines.*" The location of Ceraunian Mountains is provided by Pseudo-Scylax, on the northern border of Epirus region. Pseudo-Scymnus (2nd c. BCE) locates *Engelines* next to the *Brygians*, who according to Strabo and other sources dwelled to the north-northeast of Taulanti and Parthinoi. Virgil's account of Harmonia giving the birth to Illyrius on the banks of Illyrian River after crossing over the Macedonian frontier shows that the Engelmanian territory was in Macedonia and not in Illyria.⁴ Polybius wrote that in 217 BCE Filip V reunited with the Engelines who dwelled around the Lake Ohrid. The ancient author

³ "Why was there no Dark Age in Macedonia?" Antonis Kotsonas, Solun Archaeological Museum.

⁴ "Aeneid", Scholia Vaticana I, 243.

Manasseah (or Manasias) explicitly writes that *Engelinites* (*Engelines/Enkheleis* or *Encheleis* in Septuagint transcriptions) were Macedonian tribe of Ohrid.

However, exactly the Macedonian ethnic origin of the owners of these luxury items, that of the inhabitants of Ohrid region from the 6th century BCE, posed the biggest problem for politically-biased Western European historians. Macedonian *Engelines* didn't fit their Eurocentric dogma. Even before the discovery of these golden masks, generally there were many improvised attempts of misinterpreting the obvious origin of these Pelasgo-Proto-Macedonic tribes as *Thracian*, *Mycenae*an, *Danaan* (so-called "*Gree*x"), *Illyrian* or "*old population that was Illyrianized(?)*", etc.



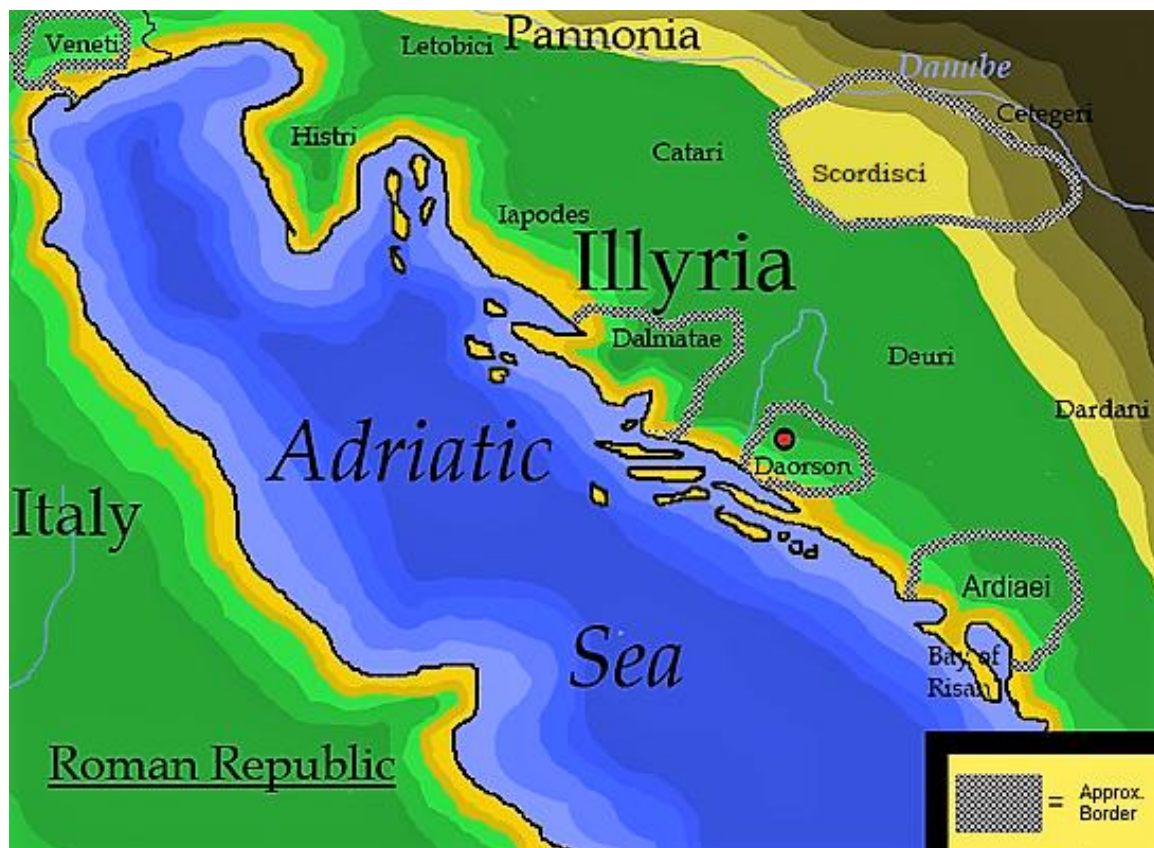
Above: **Republic of Macedonia banknote of 500 denars, with one of the Trebenishte golden masks on the obverse**

With the exception of Macedonia, funeral golden masks have never been discovered among later ancient peoples (Danaans, Thracians, Illyrians, Mysians, etc.) from the "classical period". On the other side the Golden Mask from Mycenae found by H. Schliemann dates back a thousand years before, and belongs to the Minoan culture, which is quite different (see above Antonis Kotsonas) from those of the peoples in Classical era, including the ancient *Danaans* (today mistakenly called "*ancient Gree*x"). So, when the first two golden masks were found in the suburbs of Gorenci/Trebenishte some 100 years ago, no one thought that they could hinder the painstakingly fabricated Eurocentric fable. It was not just a breaking scientific discovery, but also an unsurmountable problem for the fashioned Western European politic world, because these artifacts discredit their carefully-planned Western Eurocentric historical construction.

Since the ancient (and modern) Macedonia doesn't fit in the modern political Eurocentric historiography, with few exceptions, it was wrongly presented as "*Danaan*" (i.e. "*Gree*k"). Politically biased historians, because these masks obviously are not "*Gree*k" have tried to attribute them to the *Illyrians* or *Thraco-Illyrians* (or even sometimes as

*Thraco-Macedonian*⁵, which is as close as some western scholars dared to describe their ethnical origin). As pure Latin-geopolitical term and concept, whose boundaries have never been precisely defined, the exonym *Illyria* (from Latin "Iliricum") always served the conventional historians as a universal container and comfortable excuse for everything that didn't fit their fictional 19th century *Aryan Model*.

In any case, this explicitly Roman-administrative term did really existed – as a region, but much, much further north, and it has nothing to do with Macedonia and the region of Ohrid in particular. Nonetheless, there were no people whatsoever that called themselves "*Illyrians*" in the 6th century BCE, nor before nor after that.



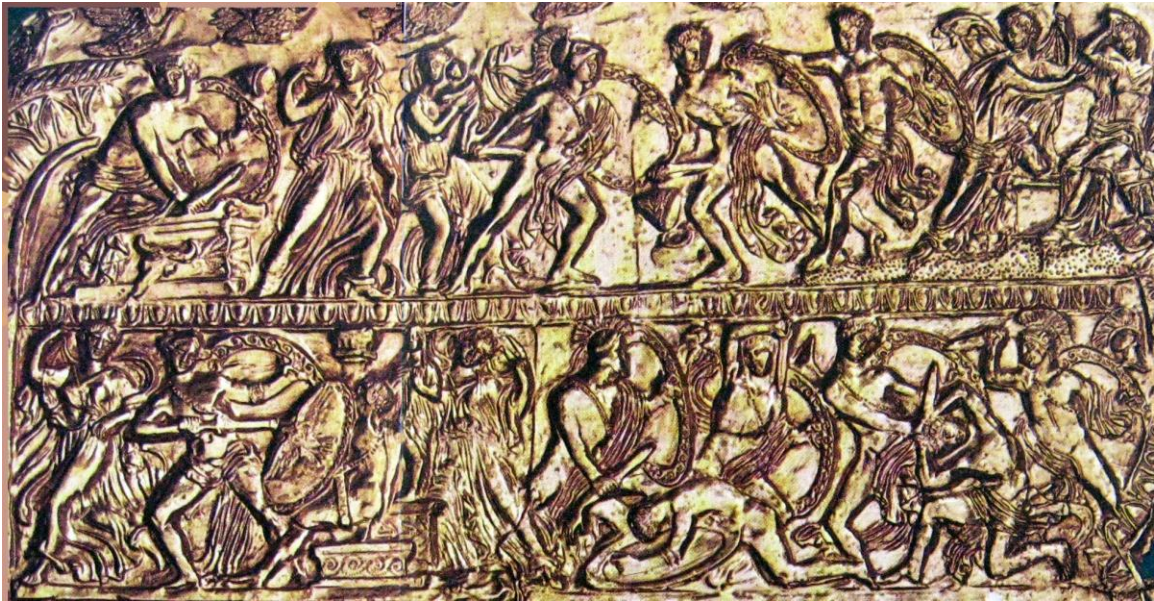
This Roman exonym was recycled and reused again in the 19th century, when Napoleon, in obvious attempt to rename the local population in occupied Northwestern Macedonian Peninsula, created an enclave with a name that differs from the original local ones. Austro-Hungarian empire continued this practice of using the old Roman exonym for renaming the Macedonic inhabitants, and officially maintained and supported this hotchpotch Latinized substitute for ethnicity until 1849.

⁵ Hammond 1972 (D 46) 93, citing *Živa Antika* 3 (1953) pp.261; Hammond and Griffith 1979 (D 50) 74f, 92f; Hammond 1989 (E 76) 40. Cf. *CAH* IV², pp.442-443.



And, thenafter they recycled this Roman/Latin exonym once again, during the 1913 creation of “Albania”, when the term “*Illyria*” was once more pulled out of the hat and projected further south, in a still very actual attempt to use it for dividing and renaming of the local autochthonous inhabitants by giving them alternative names and origin. The western conventional historiographers even tried to embed there the Albanian settlers

from the Caucasus... however *Illyria* (and *Illyrians*) never was an ethnic designation and was and still it is nothing else than just another Latin vulgar misinterpretation ("Interpretatio Latinum"), a way in which the Romans called the countries and inhabitants on the other side of the Adriatic Sea. Exactly the same as for the vulgar name of today Slovenia and Northern Italy oldest natives – from *Veneti* (from vulgar Latin "*Vene-di*" – ‘comes-from’); and/or Latin "*Graecus*", the "*Illyria*" is plain exonym as well. It was and always remained a name given by foreign invaders (Romans) to the region they occupied across the Adriatic.



Above: a **golden relief from a Macedonian tomb. 3rd century BCE**

In the perspective of the above enlightening revelations, and for the sake of the facts, a small digression it must be made here, regarding the introduction of the conventional 19th c. Eurocentric historiography:

- After the Crete gained autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in 1898, around a dozen excavations began on the island. Chief among them was the investigation of Knossos, led by the famous British archaeologist sir Arthur Evans. On the other side of the “front”, in 1906, Berlin-based Assyriologist Hugo Winckler initiated parallel excavations in Hattuša, located in central Asia Minor. Through the exploration of Troy, Mycenae, Knossos, Hattuša and many other sites, ancient civilizations came to light that had existed over a millennium prior to “*classical*” antiquity. Soon archaeologists faced the task of structuring the newly acquired knowledge concerning these early Aegean Civilizations.

But, in his publications after 1920, Sir Arthur Evans created a mostly valid, 3-part chronology (Early, Middle, Late) for the 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE, and thus laid the very foundation for the new discipline – Aegean Prehistory. Evans set out to cover 3 large regions: Asia Minor, mainland “Greece”, and Crete. For each of these regions, a cultural center was already well known: Troy, Mycenae, and Knossos respectively. Evans also ended up defining 3 big civilizations of the Aegean. But, he excluded that only two

of those coincided with the regions and centers listed above (?). Knossos was, of course, the center of the Minoan civilization, and Mycenae the one of the Mycenaean. But, Troy remained isolated. Instead of assigning a civilization to Troja as well, Evans gave the Aegean islands their own culture (?), even though they had no capital and were not really powerful during the 2nd millennium BCE. For the time being, Hattuša was also left out of the equation.



In spite of the obvious scientific incongruence of this unjustified selection, it was rather the romanticism of the *Philhellenists* that redefined the Aegean Prehistory at that time. Fierce fighting raged between “*Nea Ellas*” (‘*New Greece*’ – the first official name of today “*Greece*”) and Turkey around 1920, when sir Arthur Evans conceived the chronology for Aegean Prehistory. Given these circumstances, it would not have occurred to a *Philhellenist* like Evans to direct scholarly attention to any civilization on Turkish soil. As a result, even though Troy was and is by far the world’s most famous stratified archaeological site, it remained ignored. And together with Troy were ignored all of its allies from the Trojan War – Paionians, Maionians, Brygians/Phrygians, Tevcrians, Hittites, and all the Macedonians in general.



...

But let's return back to the Macedonian inhabitants from the 6th century BCE around the Lake Ohrid. All the data from written sources is now supported by new evidence, archaeological, epigraphic, onomastic, and by analysis with Carbon14, which showed that the tribes who lived in the region of Ohrid are from the Macedonian ethnic stock, both culturally and linguistically. Especially the data from the onomastic study directly showed that the names of the Ohrid-Struga region have many analogies in Phrygia, in Asia Minor, which proves that they should be attributed and directly related to the *Phrygians*, who are generally considered to have been the descent and related to the *Brygians* (or *Bryges*) who lived in Ohrid region northern surroundings before moving to Asia Minor. Both names, *Brygians* and *Phrygians*, are assumed to be variants of the same PIE root. The earliest mentions of the Bryges/Brygians are contained in the historical writings of Herodotus, who relates them to Phrygians, stating that according to the Macedonians, the Brygians "changed their name" to Phrygians after migrating to Anatolia, a movement which is thought to have happened between 1200 and 800 BCE, perhaps due to the Bronze Age collapse, also known as the "*Aegean Reshuffle*" (Gimbutas, *Old Europe*). Thanks to the onomastic and other linguistic researches, now we know with certainty that the Pelasgo-Phrygian (i.e. *Brygian*) substratum is one of the basic elements in the ethno-genesis of today Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia.



Other very obvious proof is the silver coinage from the local silver mines at *Damastium*, north-east of Ohrid. For it is at this period that a silver coinage in large denominations was issued with the inscription TYNTENON, and these '*Tuntenoi*' are to be identified with *Atintani* who are mentioned later as living in the area north of the Lake Ohrid.⁶ Namely, the adjective "Tunte", \tün-te\ [pronounced *toon-te*] is of unmistakably Macedonian origin, which in all local dialects means 'fit-fatty' or 'slightly fat'.⁷

All these different scientific studies and various methodologies have proven that the characteristics of the burial ritual from Trebenište necropolis are neither "*Greek*" nor *Illyrian* or *Thracian*. Gold funerary masks have been found so far only in Macedonia, but not in the territory south of Mt.Olymp or other regions of Macedonian Peninsula. Golden masks were not used in the funeral cult of dead by ancient *Danaans* (today mistakenly called "*Ancient Greex*"), and to connect them with the masks from the Cretan-Mycenaean culture is methodologically wrong, because ethnic, cultural, and chronological distances between them are incomparable.⁸

⁶ The Cambridge Ancient History, vol.6. "The 4th century BCE" p.426.

⁷ In today modern Macedonian we can find '*tunturest*', or '*natuntan*' (*overdressed*): <http://www.makedonski.info/show/%D1%82%D1%83%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82>

⁸ <http://www.kultura.mk/2019/02/izlozhba-100-godini-trebenishte-vo-arheoloskiot-muzej-zlatnite-maski-za-prv-pat-zaedno/>



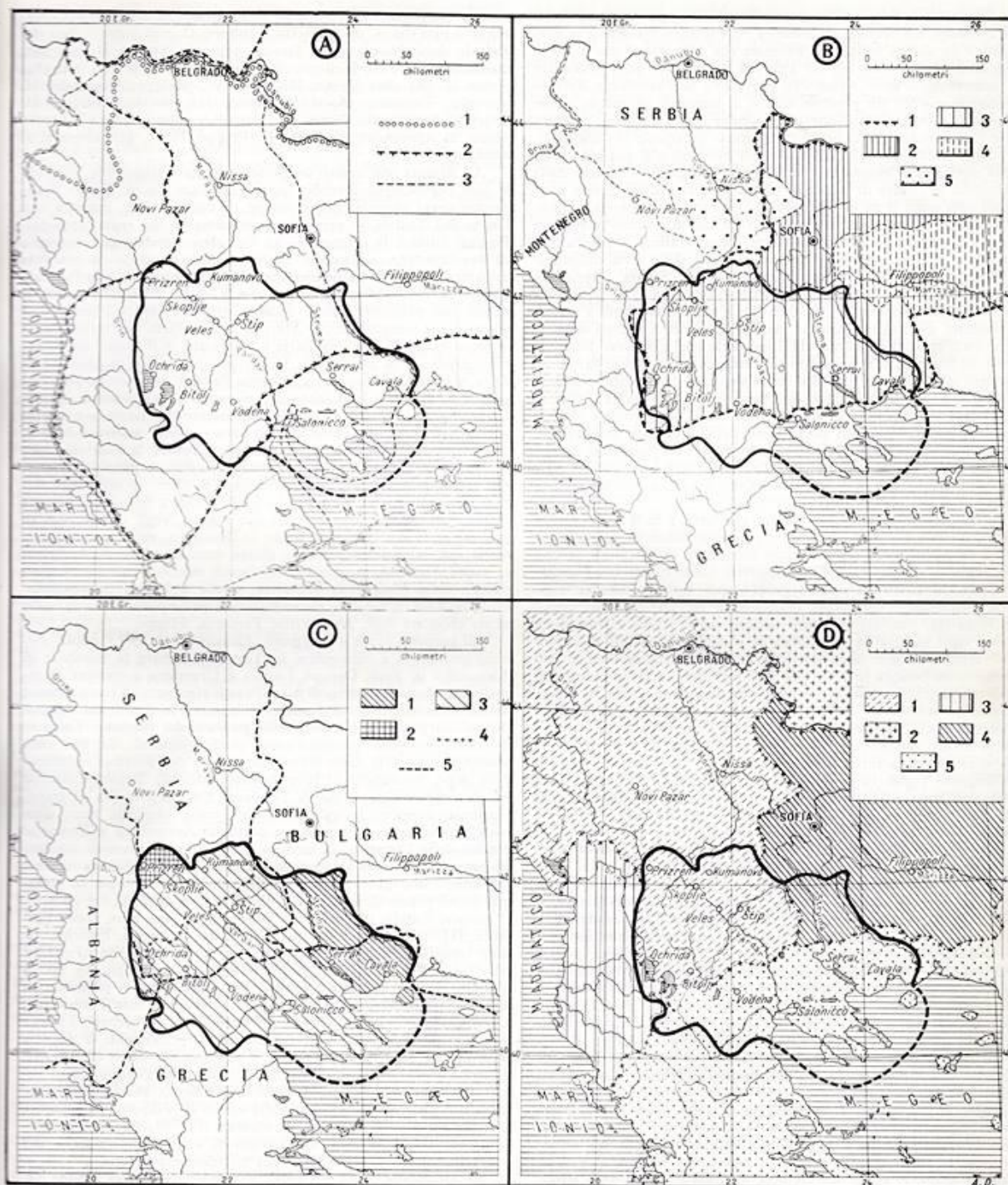
Above: **the golden larnax, another funeral item from a royal Macedonian tomb of the Aegead dynasty, 4th century BCE**

Another specific feature of the Macedonian burial rituals is the tripod funeral altar⁹ which is not found in the tombs of ancient "Greeks", who used a sacrificial bed, so-called "kline" (*Klinai*). In addition to these features from the necropolis in Gorenci/Trebenište - metal containers were found that are unknown in the "Ancient Greece." These most important features were identified by the renowned French expert Claude Rolley, after the discovery of the necropolis at Sidon: "*This proves that we are faced with two different funeral rituals,*" writes Rolley. It's important to point out that the funeral ritual is one of the most important elements of religion, as the language is the most important element in the definition of ethnicity. So, it is more than obvious that Engelines and Desarets, Orestians, Mygdones, and others, without slightest doubt belonged to the group of Macedonic tribes.

⁹ This ancient trinity principle was preserved through ancient artifacts and Macedonian funerary rituals, where is repeatedly found on the funeral altars and vessels, regularly positioned on three-legged supports. In the grave 5 from the archaeological site of Koreshnica (robbed by illegal diggers in 1996) there were also three small bronze statues of warriors situated around a huge bronze krater on a tripod. Also this trinity is found later in the *Slo-Venetic* mythology, where the supreme Trinity all-in-one god "Svarogo" ("*Sveg-Roda-Gospod*" – 'All-kin-god') , which consisted of "JAV" (visible material world that surrounds us) , " NAV" (celestial world) , and "PRAV" (the spiritual world of wisdom and justice); then this "Trinity" was subsumed by the Romans through the Etruscan triad of gods - *Jupiter, Juno* (i.e. Uni in plain Etruscan) and *Minerva* presented in the Supreme Temple – the Roman Capitol in the ancient Rome downtown; and at the end it was absorbed by the Christianity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit).



On the next page: **Italian Encyclopedia 1949; Medieval map(s) of Macedonia in the period from 6th century AD until 1913, which show the consistent uninterrupted territorial continuity until the 1st World War, a compact unity that has survived centuries of Roman and Turkish occupation, until the 20th c. foreign military intervention of the Great Powers which divided modern Macedonia in 3 parts**



A, DOMINI MEDIEVALI DELLA MACEDONIA: 1, confine settentrionale dell'Impero bizantino (sec. VI); 2, massima estensione dell'Impero bulgaro (sec. X); 3, massima estensione dell'Impero serbo (sec. XIV) - B, LA MACEDONIA E LA BULGARIA SECONDO I TRATTATI DI S. STEFANO E DI BERLINO: 1, confine della Grande Bulgaria dal trattato di S. Stefano; 2, la Bulgaria secondo il trattato di Berlino; 3, la Macedonia restituita alla Turchia per il trattato di Berlino; 4, la Rumania eretta in principato; 5, territorio assegnato alla Serbia per il trattato di Berlino - C, PROGETTO DI SPARTIZIONE DELLA MACEDONIA FRA LA BULGARIA E LA SERBIA (29 FEBBRAIO 1913): 1, territorio assegnato alla Bulgaria; 2, territorio assegnato alla Serbia; 3, Macedonia autonoma; 4, linea di divisione fra le rispettive rivendicazioni, nel caso che la Macedonia non avesse acquistato l'autonomia - D, LA MACEDONIA SECONDO IL TRATTATO DI NEUILLY: 1, Iugoslavia; 2, Romania; 3, Albania; 4, Bulgaria; 5, Grecia

Addendum: Trebenište Culture, which lately came to high notification in international literature, and the interest that appeared stems largely also from the advancement of European Union accession process of the Republic of Macedonia. It is largely conditioned with the 20th century new demarcation lines of the ethnic borders, and the new origin-policies of the new nations (cf., "Katzarov, G. Paionia – "Historical and Geographical Study", 1921). The adjoining archaeological data, some of which came from quite recent times (2002, 2009) added extraordinary scientific breakthrough, and this study reflects on those new findings. The new arguments should be attributed to the ethnic origin of the people from Trebenište Culture. Ancient sources refer to them as *Brygians*, who were the ancestors of the Phrygians in Asia Minor, large numbers of whom are reported to have crossed over to Asia Minor from Europe in the 2nd millennium BCE. Yet, according to other popular traditions (Herodotus, v.13), they were also noted as *Tevcrian* colonists from Troy. Homer (Iliad, book II, line 848) speaks of autochthonous *Paionians* from the Axios fighting on the side of the Trojans. More derivatives (*Pelasgians*, *Hyperboreans*, *Aryans*...) could be spoken-off about the Indo-European origins of those people, but their close kin relations are out of question.

There have been several instances when leading researchers in this project quit the tenure because of political or reshuffling-borders reasons. For example B. Filow who wrote the earliest publication on Trebenishte (in 1927 this work appeared only in German language), following the Bulgarian defeat in WW1 was forced to leave Macedonia and transferred his expert attention on the Douvanli necropolis, near Philipopolis (today *Plovdiv*). From 1929 to 1934 wide-scale excavations proceeded at Douvanli where equally rich objects of burial were discovered on the territory of five royal tumuli. Archaeological dating from Douvanli appeared to run almost in the same cultural and chronological boundaries as Trebenishte, 800-500 BCE, or roughly spoken the Macedonic Bronze Age period that preceded the one of "*Greece*".

However, the overall observations tend to procure a single unifying point, that as early as the end of Bronze Age and beginning of Iron Age in the Macedonian Peninsula. There were thriving autochthonous Macedonic cultures developing in the central and northern extensions of the Macedonian Peninsula (which barbarian domains were called "Europe" by the "*Greeks*" themselves, ipso facto). Whether those packs of civilization activities are called *Macedonic*, or *Pelasgian* and *Pre-Indo-European* indigenous population by others, or with some yet unknown name, it still remains to be decided with future discoveries which will hopefully permit more accurate definition of the ethnicity of these prehistoric inhabitants of Macedonia. However, until further revelations the only plausible conclusion is their Proto-Macedonic nomenclature, as all the later post-factum conventional interpretations are simply later and post-factum. The historical overwhelming advantage of *Magna Grecia* culture, its colonization activities via sea in the eastern Mediterranean (and indicatively in the hinterland) are beyond any doubt. But, they have no substantial role in the original autochthonous Pelasgo-Macedonic-Brygian/Phrygian civilization achievements, which predated them by a long shot, and their only merit in regard is in the spreading it further by adopting it.



References:

1. “The struggle of Christianity with the remnants of paganism in ancient Russia” by K.M. Jalkovski, 1919.
2. B.D.Filow, K.Schkorpil, “Die archaische Nekropole von Trebenishte am Ochrida-See, Berlin und Leipzig” 1927.
3. “La nécropole archaïque de Trebenishte” by Janvier Avril, Extr. de la Revue Archéo, 1934.
4. “Who were the authors of Trebenishte Culture & the Gold Funeral Masks” by Nade Proeva.
5. “Etničkite nositeli na Trebeniškata Nekropola”, Viktorija Sokolovska, Skopje/Ohrid 1997.
6. “The impact of Ares Macedon on Athenian sculpture” by Olga Palagia.
7. “The region of Ohrid and Struga in 6th/5th c. BCE: Area, Ethnicity, Population” by Nade Proeva, 2018.
8. “100 years of Trebenishte” - National Archaeological Institute with Museum Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, N.I. Archaeological Museum of Macedonia, N.I. Institute for Protection of Monuments of Culture and Museum – Ohrid, National Institute in Belgrade, 2018.